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10-2-2006

Conduct of Faculty Searches

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Costomiris, Robert, "Conduct of Faculty Searches" (2006). *Faculty Senate Index*. 532.
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Conduct of Faculty Searches

Submitted by Robert Costomiris

10/2/2006

Question:

I would like to see the evidence the university has to support the requirements placed on search committees to advertise faculty positions in a multitude of venues in addition to the main venues used by the various disciplines. How many applicants have responded to our advertisements in these alternative venues? How many of these have taken jobs at GSU?

Rationale:

Given that this more extensive search process has been going on for quite a few years we should have some evidence to support the requirement that chairs of search committees advertise all positions in a multitude of venues. All disciplines have a major venue or clearinghouse where virtually all job seekers look for jobs. It would be highly unlikely and indeed worrisome if a potential applicant were not aware of a job opening advertised in one of these major venues.

Response:

Georgia Southern is committed to diverse pools in the hiring process, and diversity in its hires (personal conversation with Dr. Bleicken, October 16, 2006.) That said, we could take a variety of approaches in soliciting applications. Perhaps most effective is personally approaching colleagues who fit our instructional needs and desired diversity profile.

The Provost's office has gathered data from AA/EEO response cards from the past several years on where applicants indicate they heard of our position (unfortunately, we know that the number of applicants who return the cards is very small.) That is posted as an attachment. Marcia Jones of the Office of Institutional Compliance also provides a list of resources on diversity, as well as a statement on building diverse applicant pools.

Pat Humphrey, Senate Moderator

Minutes 10/24/2006: Robert Costomiris inquired about what evidence the University has to support requirements that search committees advertise in multiple venues beyond the main venue for a given field. Data from Affirmative Action/EEO Cards was compiled by the Provost's Office. It showed that female hires remained, for about the last six years, in roughly the 40 to 45% range.

Minority hires increased from roughly 8 to 14% of each year's hires. As for the source where the applicants found out about the vacancies, overwhelmingly it's the Chronicle of Higher Education and the World Wide Web. The latter may be professional organization websites, and those account for about 70% of applications from those who complete the cards. Approximately 10% of applicants complete the cards. However, the big answer is that Georgia Southern is committed to building a diverse faculty. So we all need to do as much as we can to recruit applications from qualified individuals of all backgrounds. Marcia Jones (Institutional Compliance) actually compiled and distributed some other documents that she has written on building diverse applicant pools.

Clara Krug (CLASS): In reference to the RFI, Krug stated that the fact that search committee members are not allowed to say that they are going to be meeting with people at discipline specific international and national meetings for the purpose of interviewing them for positions creates a recruitment problem for us. She asked if that is going to change any time soon. There are many institutions in the United States, for example, that interview during the Modern Language Association (MLA) at the end of December, but Georgia Southern is not allowed to write that in the MLA's job list, which goes everywhere, and among foreign language and English faculty, too, is even more carefully read than the Chronicle.

Pat Humphrey (COST) Senate Moderator: Humphrey mentioned that SEC members had discussed this topic at their meeting the previous week. Subsequently, she had checked the search procedures, and she hadn't found anything about this point.

Linda Bleciken (Provost): She deferred to Dr. Marcia Jones, the office of Institutional Compliance.

Marcia Jones (Institutional Compliance): Jones made the following statements about recruiting faculty:

1. Members of search committees are not precluded from interviewing at meetings. The issue is whether or not one person can represent the committee at those meetings. If only one member of the committee is present, that is not the typical interview session. When you bring somebody to campus, you basically have a committee that meets with the individual; you schedule meetings with the dean and with other faculty members; perhaps the candidate teaches on campus.

2. What we have proposed is that, if every member of the committee is attending the conference and it's done in lieu of a telephone interview with the candidate, then that is permissible. But one person interviewing is not permissible. Simply because you have eliminated the entire interaction with the other committee members and the other constituents on campus, and there are certain procedures that need to go through.

3. You don't go to a conference to interview applicants who have submitted an application at the conference. And all of a sudden the person has not gone through the prescreening process; he/she has not been screened more intensively by the committee members.

4. If the process is that you screen the applications as they come in, and as a committee you've elected to interview three or four or five people at a conference, then that's much different than sitting at a table or in some hotel room and interviewing applicants as they come in or attend the conference, or sign up to be interviewed by Georgia Southern.

5. So if you follow the process, and the interview at a conference is in lieu of a telephone interview with the candidate, then that's a much different structure than simply pulling whatever five people you might have time to talk with who have signed up at the MLA placement [center].

Clara Krug (CLASS): Krug made several statements about her own experience as a member of search committees at Georgia Southern:

1. She has never served on a committee when only one person conducted interviews at a conference.

2. The interviews have always been set up by the committee, not by a one-person Fiat.

3. They have never been set up at the MLA Convention. She requested that Jones tell all faculty members what she had just told members of the Senate “because there is lore about [search] interviews:

1. Search committees are not allowed to use the word “interview” when referring to a conference.

2. Committee members are not told that there is a possibility of an interview at a major meeting in lieu of a telephone interview.

3. Committee members are not told that they may interview if more than one member conducts the interview.

4. They are not told that it is fine to set up such an interview if the committee decides to do so.

Krug recalled that the policy of not using the word “interview” began in the mid 90s. She added that it might be cost-efficient to send two people to the MLA meeting at the behest of an entire committee, and to screen candidates. She referred to Ming Fang He’s earlier statement that sometimes people come across differently in person: “I just heard Ming Fang He say that she would like to have people interviewed in person rather than on the phone because that seems to be more valid to her. I think that might work here also. “

Marcia Jones (Institutional Compliance): Jones thinks that the issue is at what point that interview occurs. Basically, she is aware of recruitment strategies that included recruiting at the end of meetings. Those recruitment strategies essentially were interviews, and that is not permissible. You may not recruit and interview at the same meeting because you have eliminated the on-campus intensive screening of the applicant. So a committee member may not recruit somebody and come back to campus with applications, and say, “Here are my top candidates, so I think we need to invite this person to campus.” She applauded faculty members who have been doing it differently, but added that most of the other individuals have not. It has been an opportunity to both recruit and interview at the same time.

Clara Krug (CLASS): She announced plans to submit a motion for consideration at the next meeting. She would like to see written out, point-by-point, the circumstances under which search committee members may conduct interviews at

conventions. Then faculty will know what they are supposed to do as faculty on search committees, and they will do it.

Candy Schille (CLASS): Schille asked if the current policy is that, unless every member of the search committee is present at the interview during the meeting, then it has no validity.

Marcia Jones (Institutional Compliance): She specified that, if it is a recruitment session, one person may recruit. "You go to a conference, you distribute flyers, you encourage people to apply, and that's fine. One person can do that. But if one person is representing the entire committee at an interview, I think that's a much different scenario, particularly if you have not already prescreened the applications."

Pat Humphrey (COST) Senate Moderator: "Is there some minimum number from the committee who's acceptable to be doing this interviewing of prescreened applications?"

Marcia Jones (Institutional Compliance): "I don't think that has ever been ironed out because some committees are seven people and some committees are three people. So I think, as we pointed out in the search chair workshops, that if you're going to do that, you need to touch bases with the office of the Provost. To specify a number would be useless since committees vary in size.

Attachments

[Trends in New Hires of Faculty by Race and Gender, By Academic Years, 1999-2006](#)

[Building Diverse Applicant Pools](#)

[Sample Sites to Visit on Faculty Diversity](#)